

Statement from Robbinsville Township Council Advocating Inclusiveness and Support for Responsible Social Media Behavior

October 31, 2022

"In recent weeks, our community has unfortunately witnessed several unsavory conversations on local social media pages. While election season always brings out differences of opinion regarding the candidates running for local, state and/or federal office, the level of vitriol in which our neighbors are going at each other and attacking opposing viewpoints online is disturbing. This divisive and mean-spirited commentary does not represent the greater Robbinsville community we know and love. As a community and as a nation, we must all stand together for tolerance and inclusion of everyone and oppose all hatred, especially against our LGBTQ+ and Jewish communities. The Robbinsville Township Council takes immense pride in celebrating our diverse community and has repeatedly spoken out against racism and antisemitism. Examples of this include:

- Resolution 2018-109 (Recognizing April as Sikh Awareness and Appreciation Month)
- Resolution 2019-195 (Celebrating the diversity of our community while condemning hate or any form of discrimination or racism)
- Resolution 2020-172 (Condemning racism in the wake of the murder of George Floyd and affirming that until Black lives matter, all lives cannot matter)
- Resolution 2021-154 (Declaring June 2021 as LGBTQ+ Pride Month)
- Proclamations Recognizing Robbinsville Pride Month in 2021 and 2022
- Proclamation Recognizing Hindu Awareness and Appreciation Month, October 2022

Despite its many positive attributes, social media has paved the way for division by allowing so-called "keyboard warriors" to post hatred and stoke divisiveness with little regard for other people's feelings. As our society advances technologically, we slowly find ourselves losing our human connection and lacking a moral compass. Social media often allows this hatred and divisiveness to fester and spread without any direct consequences. Sadly, society is becoming numb to this online behavior.

Robbinsville is an amazing and diverse place, a place where we all can celebrate our cultural differences and work together to find solutions to the challenges we face. We pick each other up in the wake of tragedy and are consistently learning from one another. Differences of opinion should be embraced since it allows people to gain additional insight and education. It is possible for two things to be true at the same time. It is even okay to be wrong on occasion. In fact, it can be rather cathartic.

Every single person who lives and works in our town should be able to go about their day without fear of hatred or intolerance lurking around the corner. We must band together and stop these neighbor vs. neighbor attacks (whether it's online or at public meetings), and condemn all hatred, bigotry and disparaging behavior directed at those that may not share our same beliefs or opinions.

"Hate Has No Home Here" needs to be our motto moving forward. We cannot allow hatred, lies and/or conspiracy theories to dominate our local social media pages or our society. If we all lead by this example, it will help repair the divide and maintain the sense of community we enjoy here in Robbinsville. At the end of the day, we all are family, friends and neighbors trying to navigate this extremely complicated landscape of life. Let us all try to do better together and set positive examples for our children.

Please join us today in promoting the responsible use of social media, free thought and inclusiveness, while condemning all types of hatred and mean-spirited behavior toward others."

Sincerely,

Mike Cipriano - President
Debbie Blakely – Vice-President
Chris Ciaccio
Ron Witt
Mike Todd